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ABSTRACT

A discussion of second language learning and second language underproduction proposes a differentiation between conscious avoidance and subconscious underproduction Reference is made to J. Schacter's avoidance theory, which was based on a study in which Chinese and Japanese students of English as a Second Language (ESL) produced fewer Relative Clauses (RCs) in English than learners having other native languages. Comparison of Chinese and English RCs reveals that they differ in both form and other aspects, including pragmatic functions. In a survey, 15 of 16 Chinese ESL learners denied having consciously tried to avoid English RCs. Two tests involving another group of Chinese ESL learners showed no evidence that they consciously avoided English RCs. It is concluded that it is not the apparent formal difference in languages at the source of the phenomenon (i.e., avoidance), but more subtle pragmatic differences that create subconscious underproduction of the construction. Implications for second language teaching are considered. Contains 18 references. (Author/MSE)

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UNDERPRODUCTION DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN AVOIDANCE: INVESTIGATION OF UNDERPRODUCTION USING CHINESE ESL LEARNERS

Jiang Li

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UNDERPRODUCTION DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN AVOIDANCE: INVESTIGATION OF UNDERPRODUCTION USING CHINESE ESL LEARNERS

Jiang Li

This paper proposes a differentiation between conscious avoidance and subconscious underproduction through examining Schachter's (1974) avoidance theory, which was based on a study in which Chinese and Japanese ESL learners produced fewer English relative clauses (RCs) than learners of other L1 backgrounds. A comparison of Chinese and English RCs reveals that they are different not only in form but also in other aspects, such as pragmatic functions. In a survey 15 out of 16 Chinese ESL learners denied having consciously tried to avoid English RCs. Two tests involving another group of Chinese learners showed no evidence that they consciously avoided English RCs. The author therefore concludes that it is not the apparent formal difference that causes Chinese learners to consciously avoid English RCs, but the more subtle pragmatic differences that make them subconsciously underproduce this structure. Underproduction does not necessarily mean avoidance. 'Subconscious underproduction' may be a better term when L2 learners underproduce certain structures in the target language without realizing they are doing so.

The issue of avoidance behavior in second language learning was first raised by Schachter (1974), who based her theory on her study in which Chinese and Japanese speakers produced fewer English relative clauses than other L1 speakers in their writings. The problem has since been extensively discussed by researchers (Kleinmann, 1977, 1978; Chiang, 1980; Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1991; Seliger, 1989; Kamimoto, et al. 1992). However, the differentiation of conscious avoidance and subconscious underproduction has hardly received any attention. The present paper is intended to address this issue.

THE PROBLEM

Schachter (1974) examined four sets of 50 English compositions by ESL learners and compared them with the compositions of a group of native American English speakers. The first languages of the four groups of non-native speakers were Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, and Persian. The proficiency levels of the learners were either intermediate or advanced. The production of restrictive relative clauses was studied. It was found that the Persian and Arabic speakers produced as many relative clauses in their compositions as the native American English speakers (Persian 174, Arabic 154, and American 173), whereas the Chinese and Japanese speakers produced far fewer relative clauses in their compositions (Chinese 76, Japanese 63). However, it was also discovered that the Chinese and Japanese learners' error rate in producing English relative clauses was significantly lower than that of the Arabic and the Persian learners.

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Schachter explains this as the 'avoidance phenomenon'. According to Schachter, because in Chinese and Japanese the relative clauses occur to the left of head nouns, whereas in Persian and Arabic they occur to the right of head nouns, as in English, the difference between Chinese/Japanese relative clauses and English ones is greater than that between Persian/Arabic and English. Therefore, it is more difficult for Chinese and Japanese speakers to acquire this English structure, and thus, they have a tendency to avoid using English relative clauses.

> It is plausible and I think correct to suppose that they produce fewer relative clauses in English because they are *trying*[1] to avoid them, and that they only produce them in English when they are relatively sure that they are correct, which would also account for the extremely small number of errors they make (p. 210).

Conscious Avoidance And Subconscious Underproduction

According to Schachter, when learners find a certain structure difficult to produce, they will "take advantage of paraphrase relations to avoid" such a construction "while getting his ideas across" (p. 212). Thus, we can define what Schachter called "avoidance" as a situation when a second language learner knows the existence of the rules of a certain structure but is not sure about the details, and therefore when there is a need to use this structure, he/she tries to use another structure or other structures to serve the same or similar communicative purpose. Hence, there are four conditions for the potential of avoidance: (1) The learner knows the existence of the rule(s) of a specific structure; (2) He/she is not sure about certain details of the rule(s); (3) There is a need to use the structure and the learner is aware of this; and (4) The learner does not use the structure but uses some other structure(s) instead.

Kamimoto et al. (1992) quoted the comments by two second language speakers which can be regarded as examples of such kind of avoidance behavior in oral contexts (p. 251):

> I never know which Dutch nouns have common or neuter gender, so I always stick a diminutive suffix on the end of them, because then they're always neuter, bless the little things (British university professor after 25 years in the Netherlands).

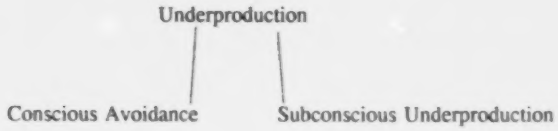
> I can't master the Polish case system. Whenever I buy food, I try to use supermarkets as often as possible so I don't have to talk and when I have to go to the butcher's or the bookstore, say, I always find myself mumbling the ends of words (Fulbright scholar, Warsaw).

During an ESL writing tutoring session, a Chinese learner of English once told me that "When I don't know whether a noun is countable or not, I just use 'a lot of' or 'lots of' to modify it. I don't use either 'many' or 'much' in such a situation". This case can be regarded as an example of second language avoidance in written contexts.

Odlin (1989) coined another term 'underproduction' to describe such a phenomenon as Chinese and Japanese learners' producing fewer relative clauses in their English writing, though he did not distinguish between the two terms. In my view, however, there are two categories of underproduction: conscious avoidance, as portrayed above, and subconscious

underproduction, which refers to such a situation when L2 learners underproduce certain structures in the target language without realizing that they are doing so. In other words, L2 learners may underproduce a certain structure in the target language, not because they feel difficulty in producing the structure but because the difference between the L1 and L2 is too subtle to be noticed. In such a situation, 'subconscious underproduction' is a better term than 'avoidance'.

Figure 1: The Relationship Between Two Kinds of Underproduction



Why Study Relative Clauses?

As mentioned above, it is more appropriate to use the term 'subconscious underproduction' than the term 'avoidance' when a group of L2 learners who share the same L1 underproduce certain structures in the L2 without realizing that they are doing so; whereas the term "avoidance" should be used exclusively for a situation where L2 learners consciously try to avoid certain forms or structures in the target language. As the latter term was put forward by Schachter (1974) and based on the findings that Chinese and Japanese students underproduced English relative clauses in their compositions, it would make sense to study the differences between English and Chinese relative clauses and to look into the issue of how Chinese learners underproduce English relative clauses. Namely, do Chinese learners consciously avoid English relative clauses or subconsciously underproduce them?

Chinese Relative Clauses

It is true that formally Chinese relative clauses are apparently different from English relative clauses: they occur to the left of head nouns. An English sentence "The girl who has just come in is my sister" can be translated into Chinese as:

Nage	*gang*	*jinlai*	*de*	*nuhai*	*shi*	*wode*	*meimei.*
That	just	come in	REL	girl	be	my	sister.

The Chinese language does not have non-restrictive relative clauses. Thus, the English sentence "The Browns, whose house has been burgled six times, never go on holiday now." will be usually translated into Chinese as two independent clauses:

Bulang	*jia*	*de*	*fangzi*	*beidao*	*guo*	*wuci,*	*tamen*	*zaiyebu*
Brown	family	GEN	house	be burgled	tense	5 times	they	never again

qu dujia le
go on holiday marker

English restrictive relative clauses can be "reduced" to *ing* phrases, *en* phrases, *to*-infinitive phrases, and in some cases, prepositional phrases; whereas Chinese relative clauses cannot:

i. *ing* phrase

Eng: People wishing to attend...

Chi: *dasuan yao canja de ren...*
wish will attend REL people

ii. *en* phrase

Eng: the 14 people arrested...

Chi: *... bei daibu de 14 ren*
passive arrest REL 14 people

iii. *to*-infinitive phrase

Eng: a house to let

Chi: *dai chuzu de fangzi*
wait let REL house

iv. prepositional phrase

Eng: visitors from London

Chi: Lunden lai de keren
London come REL visitor

Bley-Vroman and Houng (1988) examined the issue of comparative frequency of relative clauses in Chinese and English by counting relative clauses in the first five chapters of an American literary work *The Great Gatsby* and its Chinese translation. They found that only about one-third (32/93) of the original relative clauses were translated into Chinese as relative clauses. This indicates that the Chinese language may have a much lower frequency of relative clauses in written discourse.

Table 1: Frequency of RCs in first five chapters of the *Great Gatsby* and the number of the clauses translated as RCs in the Chinese Version (Adapted from Bley-Vroman and Houng, 1988:96)

RC types in English	The Great Gatsby	Rendered as RCs in Chinese translation
Restrictive	50	21 (42%)
Non-restrictive	43	11 (25%)
TOTAL	93	32 (34%)

Zhao (1989) used a translation to compare the frequency of relative clauses in English and Chinese. She collected her data by comparing English writings about impressions of China by Chinese Canadians and Americans with their Chinese translations. She concluded that Chinese may make less use of relative clause constructions than English (Zhao, 1989, quoted by Kamimoto et al., 1992).

Table 2: RCs in English text and their Chinese translation (Zhao, 1989, quoted by Kamimoto et al., 1992)

RCs in English	RCs in Chinese	RCs in English =RC in Chinese	In English only	In Chinese only
124	91	59 (48%)	65	32

Zhao (1989) also studied the functions of certain relative clauses in English. She pointed out that there are certain English relative clauses which do not have equivalent counterparts in Chinese due to their special functions (Zhao, 1989, p. 109f, quoted by Kamimoto et al., 1992)[2]:

Extraposed restrictive relative clause:

i-a) A girl is studying with me who has an IQ of 200.
[Cf. A girl who has an IQ of 200 is studying with me.]

ii-a) A man came in who was wearing very funny clothes.
[Cf. A man who was wearing funny clothes came in.]

These types of English sentences can only be translated into Chinese as independent clauses serving as comments on the previous clauses, where the latter function as topics of the sentences:

i-b) *Wo you ge nu tongxue, ta de zhishang wei* 200.
I have one female classmate, she GEN IQ be 200

ii-b) *Jinlai le ge ren, ta chuandai qiguai*
come in tense one man he wear funny

Existential sentences introduced by "there be":

ii-a) There were certain aspects of China which I was very interested in examining.

iii-b) *Wo dui zhongguo de mouxie wenti hen you xingqu jinxing kaocha*
I about China GEN some aspect very have interest carry out examining

Restrictive relative clauses which have adverbial function of concession:

iv-a) Mother who was married at sixteen had been very accurate about village life.
[Cf. Although mother was married at 16 (marriage required her to move to her in-law's village at a young age), she still remembered details of the life at her home village.]

iv-b) *Jinguan muqin shiliu sui jiu jehun le...*
although mother 16 year-old tense marry tens

Restrictive relative clauses which can only be rendered into Chinese adverbial clause of reason:

v-a) I began to wonder if I would be comfortable in a place where the people for once are just like me and yet in many ways not like me at all.
[Cf. I began to wonder if I would be comfortable there because people there for once are just like me and yet in many ways not like me at all]

v-b) *Wo bu zhidao zai nali wo huibuhui gandao shufu, yinwei nali*
I not know in there I whether or not feel comfortable because there

de renmen ji hen xiang wo, you you xuduo fangmian genben
GEN people for-once very be like me but have many aspect at all

bu xiang wo.
not be like me

English relative clauses which also serve as information focus and can only be translated into Chinese by "shi...de" construction, which is used to express an established fact:

vi-a) China is a country that is behind Canada in technology and a number of scientific disciplines
[Cf. China is behind Canada in technology and a number of scientific disciplines.].

vi-b) *Zhongguo zai jishu he yixie kexue xueke fangmian shi luohou yu*
China in technology and some science discipline aspects behind (prep)

Jianada de
Canada

I compared narrative articles in a nation-wide Chinese newspaper *People's Daily* (November 10 and 11, 1992) and those in a Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail* (December 12, 15 and 16, 1992) as well as an article in the "MLC Bulletin" of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (November 13, 1992). I found that on average among every 1000 English words in the articles studied, there are approximately ten restrictive relative clauses, plus approximately seven other "reduced" relative clauses, such as *-ing* phrases, *en phrases*, *to*-infinitive phrases and prepositional phrases. It was also discovered that among every 1000 Chinese words in the article studied, there are roughly eight relative clauses. However, what interests me more is that out of ten Chinese relative clauses, five of them can only or would likely be translated into English as "reduced" relative clauses[3].

Table 3: Number of RC Structures in an English newspaper and a Chinese newspaper

Newspaper	Number of RCs (Out of 1000 words)	Reduced RCs	Total
Glodal and Mail (English)	10	7	17
People's Daily (Chinese)	8 (50% would be rendered into English reduced RCs)	0	8

From the above data we can see that (1) written Chinese appears to have fewer relative clauses than English; (2) certain English "reduced" relative clause structures correspond to Chinese relative structures whereas Chinese does not have such "reduced" relative clauses; (3) certain English relative structures correspond to Chinese non-relative clause structures; (4) only some of the English "full" relative clause structures totally correspond to Chinese relative clauses.

Do Chinese Learners Try To Avoid English Relative Clauses?

I have conducted two studies to investigate the issue of whether Chinese learners of English consciously avoid using English relative clauses or subconsciously underproduce them. The first study was a retrospective interview conducted individually with sixteen Chinese speakers of English in Toronto, Canada, who came respectively from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Seven of them were doing degree studies at universities, three were spouses of students, two were working in Toronto, and four were presently learning English at the School of Continuing Education of the University of Toronto. The English proficiency levels of these people varied from intermediate to advanced.

The following questions were asked in Chinese: "From your own experience in learning English, have you ever considered this: because English relative clauses are difficult, you

tried to avoid using them in your writing? In other words, when there was a need to use relative clauses, you deliberately used other structures instead. Is that true for you? For example, when you intended to say "I sent him a gift which I bought in Shanghai", you wrote "I sent him a gift. I bought the gift in Shanghai" or "I bought a gift in Shanghai, and sent it to him"".

After thinking about ten seconds, all but one answered "No". The one who said "Yes" answered: "When I just learned the structure many years ago and was writing an examination, I might choose to avoid using a relative clause for fear of losing marks. Otherwise I wouldn't do so." Later I learned that this participant received his master's degree in applied linguistics. He may have read Schachter's article or other related articles, and thus had a kind of preconception on this issue. None of the other participants thought that English relative clauses were difficult for them.

In order to objectively investigate whether Chinese learners would consciously avoid English relative clauses, a second investigation involving another group of eleven Chinese learners was conducted. All the participants in the second study were of similar backgrounds to the first group but were different people except one[4]. Among them, four were doing degree studies at the University of Toronto, one had just graduated from a Canadian university, two were visiting scholars at the University of Toronto, two were students learning English in the School of Continuing Education of the University of Toronto, and two were working in Toronto. The English proficiency levels of the subjects ranged from intermediate to advanced.

Two tests were given to the participants. An interview was held with each of the participants after the first test. The first test was composed of two parts: the first required the testees to answer in written English three questions which required them to define certain objects in order to elicit the use of relative clauses; the second required the subjects to provide written translations of six sentences from Chinese into English, which also may elicit English relative clauses. Among the translation sentences, two can only be rendered into English with relative clauses, so that it also tested whether the participants had the knowledge of English relative clauses (see Appendix A). The participants were tested and interviewed individually.

None of the participants were able to produce all the sentences with relative clauses. The participant who scored best was able to produce seven relative clauses out of nine sentences; the participant who scored lowest was able to produce two relative clauses out of nine. The average of the correct production of relative clauses was 49.5% (see Table 4). For each of the sentences which was not produced with a relative clause, a question was asked "Did you ever think about using a relative clause in this sentence?". If the answer was "Yes", then the participant was requested to answer "Why?".

Table 4: The production of English RCs in the two tests in descending order of ability level (A to K)

Subject	Test	Correct RCs	RCs with errors	Non-RCs
A	1st	7 (77.8%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.22%)
	2nd	9 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
B	1st	6 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)
	2nd	9 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
C	1st	5 (55.6%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)
	2nd	9 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
D*	1st	6 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)
	2nd	5 (55.6%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (33.3%)
E	1st	5 (55.6%)	0 (0%)	4 (44.4%)
	2nd	6 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)
F	1st	5 (55.6%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (33.3%)
	2nd	5 (55.6%)	0 (0%)	4 (44.4%)
G	1st	4 (44.4%)	0 (0%)	5 (55.6%)
	2nd	6 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)
H	1st	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	5 (55.5%)
	2nd	6 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)
I	1st	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	5 (55.5%)
	2nd	6 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)
J	1st	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	5 (55.6%)
	2nd	5 (55.6%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (33.3%)
K	1st	2 (22.2%)	1 (11.1%)	6 (66.7%)
	2nd	6 (66.7%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)
TOTAL	1st	49 (49.5%)	7 (7.1%)	43 (43.4%)
	2nd	71 (71.7%)	2 (2.0%)	26 (26.3%)

*Subject D was the subject who had attended the first study.

Out of thirty-seven cases in which the participants did not produce relative clauses, only four of them in five cases answered that he/she had thought about using a relative clause but then decided not to do so; then when asked why they did not use relative clauses, one answered "I think a prepositional phrase is better here", one answered "I think an *-ing* phrase is simpler in this case", and one answered "A relative clause here would be too long; I prefer a prepositional phrase in this case". The participant who had taken part in the first study answered "Yes" twice. His explanation for one case was "I prefer a *to*-infinitive phrase in this case" and for the other "The distance between the head noun and the relative clause

is too long, and I was taught by my teacher not to use relative clauses in such cases." None of the participants consciously "try to avoid" relative clauses because they "are too difficult" to them. In addition, at the end of the test, the participants were also given feedback on the errors they had made in the relative clauses they had constructed if there were any[5].

One or two days after the first test, another test was given to the participants, again individually. The test was also made up of definition questions and translation sentences (Chinese-English) though the contents were different. Among the translation sentences, three were adapted from Zhao's examples of English relative clauses mentioned above which do not have Chinese equivalents due to their special functions (Zhao, 1989, quoted by Kamimoto et al., 1992; also see Appendix B). Before the participants started writing the test, they were told that each of the sentences should contain a relative clause.

Every participant was able to produce all the relative clauses except for those which do not have equivalent counterparts in Chinese due to their special pragmatic functions mentioned above[6]. This suggests that when being consciously aware of the situation, Chinese learners of English whose language proficiency levels are at or above intermediate can easily produce those English relative clauses which do not have special functions as mentioned above. They do not consciously avoid English relative clauses. This also indicates that English relative clauses are not difficult to Chinese learners as far as the forms are concerned. Because these Chinese learners made far fewer errors in the second test than they did in the first test [only two errors out of seventy-three relative clauses (2.7%) as compared with seven out of fifty-six relative clauses in the first test (12%)], it appears that Chinese learners' errors in forming relative clauses are easy to correct.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

By analysing the above data we can see that there is a major syntactical difference between the Chinese and English relative clauses--the Chinese relative clauses occur to the left of head nouns whereas the English relative clauses occur to the right of head nouns. There are also functional or pragmatic differences as well as other syntactic differences: some English relative clauses have special pragmatic functions besides functioning as noun modifiers, such as those categories of English relative clauses which serve as the information focus, those which function as adverbial clauses of concession and reason, and reduced relative clauses in English.

It appears that the major syntactic difference, namely, the position of the English relative clauses with respect to the head nouns, does not cause much difficulty to Chinese learners, as has been manifested in this study. What does cause problems are those English relative clauses which have special pragmatic functions. These relative clauses can hardly find their way into the English writing by Chinese learners, because Chinese learners would naturally produce non-relative clause structures according to their functions, which are closer to corresponding structures in Chinese, to achieve the same communicative purposes. That is to say, under such circumstances, Chinese learners do not think about relative clauses and would produce such structures as adverbial clauses, compound clauses or independent simple sentences instead.

As mentioned above, there are also a group of Chinese relative clauses which would likely or can only be translated into English as other simpler structures--'reduced' relative clauses. This group of Chinese relative clauses cannot be easily transferred into Chinese learners' English as relative clauses either, for the linguistic rule of economy will work here and thus prevents Chinese learners from producing more sophisticated structures, as has been shown in this study.

Therefore, Chinese learners only transfer those Chinese relative clauses that totally correspond to 'pure' English relative clauses, namely, those full relative clauses which do not have other functions beside being noun modifiers, into their English writing, and thus produce fewer relative clauses. The problem of Chinese learners' underproduction of English relative clauses is subconscious underproduction, but not conscious avoidance. What causes the problem is not the apparent syntactic difference, but the more subtle pragmatic differences. In other words, it is not the gross difference between the forms of the relative clauses of the two languages that causes Chinese learners to consciously avoid using English relative clauses, but the pragmatic differences, which are too subtle for Chinese learners of English to perceive, that make them subconsciously underproduce English relative clauses. Underproduction does not necessarily mean avoidance.

From the present study we can also see that as far as the form is concerned, English relative clauses are not so difficult for Chinese learners whose language proficiency is at or above the intermediate level as Schachter has claimed. Then why are the forms of English relative clauses not that difficult to Chinese learners while the constructions of relative clauses in the two languages are so different? To answer this question, we should go back to the theoretical basis of Schachter's version of avoidance behavior in second language learning. According to Schachter, because of the gross syntactic difference between the Chinese/Japanese relative clauses and the English ones, the English relative clauses are difficult to these learners and they therefore try to avoid using this structure. Such an assumption is, in fact, based on the so-called strong version of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, which claims that a difference in patterns and forms between a learner's first language and the target language will cause interference and therefore will be difficult for him/her to learn and that a greater difference will result in greater learning difficulty (Lado, 1957). Many studies, however, have proved that this version of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is invalid in predicting the difficulty a learner of a second language may encounter (Buteau, 1970; Wardhaugh, 1970; Whitman & Jackson, 1972; Dulay & Burt, 1974). Oller & Ziahosseiny (1970) compared the learning of English spelling by learners who use Roman alphabet in their first languages and those who do not use Roman alphabet, and discovered that the learners who use Roman alphabet in their first languages made more spelling errors than those who do not use Roman alphabet in their first languages. They therefore suggested a moderate version of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis: gross differences do not necessarily cause greater learning difficulty; on the contrary, slight or subtle differences can result in greater learning difficulty.

According to the moderate version of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, Chinese learners of English do not necessarily have difficulty in learning the forms of English relative clauses which are apparently different from those of their first language. What does cause

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problems to Chinese learners are the pragmatic differences. Such differences are too subtle to be noticed by these learners, and therefore, they subconsciously underproduce relative clauses in their English writing. Thus, it is fair to conclude that so far the study of avoidance is based on a false hypothesis--the strong version of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis--which is in the first place invalid in predicting the difficulty a second language learner may encounter. Although intermediate and advanced second language learners may consciously avoid using certain structures in which they do not have confidence, they do not necessarily avoid structures which are apparently different in forms. Furthermore, they may subconsciously underproduce certain structures because of certain differences between the first and the second languages that are too subtle to be noticed, especially the differences in the aspects of pragmatics.

In spite of the debate over whether second language researchers should distinguish between "conscious" and "subconscious" learning (McLaughlin, 1990), the fact does exist that in communication, people, particularly L2 speakers, may sometimes pay more attention and sometimes less attention to the forms of a language. On one hand, they may consciously avoid the structures in which they do not have confidence; on the other hand, they may underproduce certain structures certain structures without realizing they are doing so, as was manifested in the present study. Therefore, a distinction between conscious avoidance and subconscious underproduction may help second language learners to better master the target language. If learners of a second language who share the same first language have a tendency to consciously avoid a certain structure in the second language because they are not quite clear about the construction of the structure, sufficient comprehensible input and output of the structure together with some explicit instruction of the rule(s) in meaningful contexts may help them to solve their problem. If they subconsciously underproduce a certain structure of the second language, then the task can be more difficult. In this case, exactly what causes the underproduction should be found out, and corresponding remedies should be offered, such as informing the learners of the problem and providing them with proper training; yet more research is needed in this respect.

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NOTES

[1]Italicized by the present writer

[2]The following six pairs of English and Chinese examples are from Zhao, quoted by Kamimoto et al. 1992:270.

[3]Among the three English newspaper articles studied, one was titled as "History in the making", an article about Black Creek Pioneer Village in Metro Toronto by John Bentley May; one was "Putting a new face on Berlin's urban renewal" on the issue of house construction in Berlin in the post-cold-war era, special to the Globe and Mail, by Joyce Drohan; the other was by Marry Taylor, a Canadian living in Japan, "Remembering the 47 Samurai", which was about what the she had seen in that country. The article on the Modern Language Center Bulletin was by a former M.Ed. student at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Jeff Neufeld about his experience in Saudi Arabia as an EFL teacher. Among the six Chinese articles, one was a report about a remote area in Northwestern China by a newspaper reporter; one was a report on a certain university in China, also by a newspaper reporter; the others were written by Chinese students doing graduate studies in the U.S.A. and some European countries about their experience in these countries.

[4]This subject was the first one to be tested, and it was found that he was aware of the purpose of the test because he had taken part in the first study, so it was decided not to use the subjects who had participated in the first study any more.

[5]Five of the errors the subjects made were leaving out relative pronouns, one was misusing "who" for "that", and one was leaving out "in" in the structure "in which".

[6]Out of the eleven subjects, only three were able to construct the relative clauses adapted from Zhao's examples. All of the other subjects were only able to render these structures into English adverbial clauses, compound clauses, or independent simple sentences no matter how hard they tried.

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APPENDIX A: TEST ONE

I. Answer the following questions:

1. What is a clock? (Supposed answer: A clock is an instrument that tells time.)
2. What is a hat? (Supposed answer: A hat is something [that] a person wears on his/her head.
3. What is a house? (Suppose answer: A house is a building where/in which people live.)

II. Translate the following into English:

1. Chi: *Gang jinlai de na nuhai shi wode meimei.*
   just come in REL that nuhai be my sister

   (Eng: The girl who just came in is my sister).

2. Chi: *Wo xihuan ni zuotian mai de xie.*
   I like you yesterday buy REL shoe

   (Eng: I like the shoes you bought yesterday.)

3. Chi: Smith *boshi zhengzai xie yiben youguan zhongguo de shu.*
   Dr. Smith (tense) write one about China GEN book

   Wo hen xihuan tade shu.
   I very like his book(s)

   (Eng: Dr. Smith, whose books I like very much, is writing a book on China.)

4. Chi: *Jinlai le ge ren, ta dai ze qiguaide maozi.*
   come in tense one man he wear tense funny hat

   (Eng: A man who was wearing a funny hat came in. or: A man who came in was wearing a funny hat.)

5. Chi: *Zhe shi wo shi nian qia zhu guo de fangzi.*
   this be I 10 year ago zhu tense GEN house

   (Eng: This is the house where/in which I lived ten years ago.)

6. Chi: *zhe bushi ni chidao de yuanyin.*
   this be not you be late REL reason

   (Eng: This is not the reason why you were late.)

APPENDIX B: TEST TWO

I. Answer the following questions:

1. What is shoes? (Supposed answer: Shoes are objects [that/which] you wear on your feet.)
2. What is a classroom? (Supposed answer: A classroom is a room where/in which students have classes.)
3. What is a teacher? (Supposed answer: A teacher is a person who teaches.)

II. Translate the following into Chinese:

1. Chi: *wo you ge gege, ta hui youyong.*
   I have one brother he can swim

   (Eng: I have a brother who can swim.)

2. Chi: *Zhang xiansheng zhengzai daoyan yichu xin dianying, wo hen*
   Mr. Zhang tense direct one new movie I very

   xihuan tade dianying.
   like his movie

   (Eng: Mr. Zhang, whose movies I like very much, is directing a new movie.)

3. Chi: *Wo you yiliang Ribeng zao de qiche.*
   I have one Japan make REL car

   (Eng. I have a car made in Japan.)

4. Chi: *Zhongguo zai kexue he jishu fangmian shi luohou*
   China (prep) science and technology aspects behind

   yu Meiguo de.
   (prep) USA

   (Eng: China is a country that is behind USA in science and technology.)

5. Chi: *Wo bu zhidao zai nali wo huibuhui gandao shufu, yinwei nali*
   I not know (prep) there I whether feel comfortable because there

   de renmen yidian bu xiang wo.
   GEN people a little not be like me

   (Eng: I wonder if I would be comfortable in a place where the people are not like me at all.)

6. Chi: *Muqin shiqi shui jiu chujia le, ke dui jiaxiang de shenghuo*
mother 17 year-old tense married tense but about home town GEN life

renran shifeng shuxi.
still very be familiar with

(Eng: Mother who was married at seventeen were still familiar with the life in her home town.)